

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

January 17, 2019

Commission Members Present:

Bob Ford
Bianca Chang
Kui Zhao
Scott Markow
Peter Hwang
Hector Garcia

Commission Members Absent:

Reverend Turner
Joan Hash
Shiraz Ahmed

Staff:

Stephanie Chapple, Recording Secretary
Dr. Barbara J. Sands, HRC Executive Secretary
Melissa Goldmeier, HRC Legal Counsel

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **PUBLIC FORUM** – Steve Charing, Howard County citizen
3. **APPROVE MINUTES** – December minutes approved.
4. **CHAIR’S REPORT** – Chair Ford thanked everyone for their vote of confidence as selecting him as Chair. He also thanked everyone for attending the meeting, despite the weather.
5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS** - Please review reports prior to the meeting. If you have any questions regarding the reports submitted, please bring your questions to the meeting. (**Reports submitted)
 - ❖ ****Finance and Fair Lending with Housing** – Scott/Shiraz – hard copy report submitted. Per Scott, most of his report highlighted issues resulting from the Federal government shut down, and how it has been affecting housing programs, and Housing Choice Voucher programs, etc. Howard County is doing a number of things to mitigate this i.e. suspending citizens’ water disconnections in residences, suspending library fees, etc. Children of county residents can apply for free/reduced lunch at the child’s school, and receive a decision within 24-48 hours. Per Dr. Sands, Baltimore Neighborhood Initiative Association has been closed, and will currently be resurrected. OHR is presenting a proposal to the Department of Housing and the state to do part of what BNI was doing as far as investigating discriminating cases, as it relates to housing. Training will be held next month.
 - ❖ ****Legislation** – Bob/Kui – Kui submitted hard copy report. Currently there are no Human Rights bills or Legislations at the county level. A number were enacted at the state level. See report. At the federal level, nothing relevant to human rights became law. Recently, Congress introduced some Fair Housing related bills, such as to provide comfortable and safe temperature level in dwelling units receiving certain Federal Housing assistance and for other purposes.
 - ❖ **Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee** – Reverend Turner – No report.
 - ❖ ****HRC Awards Committee** – Bianca/Hector – To date, 1 nomination received. Please circulate nomination forms and/or link to your community groups and group affiliations. The Historic Oakland Ballroom is reserved, however, the foyer area will be shared with another group. The Ballroom, foyer, and meeting rooms are all available for Wed, 4/17, a day prior. Motion was made to host the event on 4/17. Five members voted to approve, 1 abstained. Motion carried. The Award program will be held on Wednesday, April 17th at 6:30 p.m., Historic Oakland Ballroom.
 - ❖ **Human Trafficking Committee** – Peter, Shiraz and Joan – No report. Per Dr. Sands, the Human Trafficking Council, and several elected officials met last Wednesday at NLCC to discuss trends, and issues relative to Human Trafficking across the country. Approximately 100 citizens attended, including AGAST and other non-profit agencies. Peter would like to meet with the new Police Chief in the coming months.
 - ❖ ****LGBTQ Committee** – Bob – Please see Bob’s written report. Additionally, Howard County Pride is having Gay Day at Savage Mill on January 26th, 4 – 8 p.m. Public is invited. Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Additionally, PFLAG completed a report on the initiatives and work they’re doing throughout the year. Commissioners are encouraged to view the report.
 - ❖ ****Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee** – Bianca – Reported by CMS, the budget was not affected during the government shutdown.

- ❖ **HRC Goals Committee – Peter, Bianca, Reverend Turner – Per Dr. Sands, once the committee determines what HRC information they'd like shared on the website, Dr. Sands will speak to PIO about what options are available. Bianca forwarded a draft of a previous calendar of events. Stephanie will create a calendar for upcoming trainings and programs relevant to HRC.
- ❖ Ad-Hoc / Nominating Committee – Peter, Joan – No report. Per Dr. Sands, as stated in the Code, the decision of appointing candidates for the HRC is the decision of the County Executive, however HRC members can interview and forward candidates' names for consideration.
- ❖ Community Outreach Sub-Committee – (formed following CR-180 Study) – Peter, Hector – Dr. Sands drafted talking points when members visit various community groups. Scott followed up with Rabbi Starr, and followed up with the Chair of the Board of Rabbis. Members agreed to attend an upcoming community group's regular monthly meeting, see what their interests are, and begin building a relationship. In addition to Scott working with the Board of Rabbis, Hector will meet with FOLA, and Bob will meet with PFLAG.

5. STUDENT REPORT – No report.

6. STAFF REPORT – See Dr. Sands written report. OHR is working with the Coalition for Justice and Equality for All Citizens group. More information will be shared. Approximately 300 citizens attended KWANZAA, hosted by OHR. This year, a KWANZAA committee was formed with representatives from 6 different departments. HIGHLIGHTS – Ambassador from Zimbabwe spoke on the Principle of “Cooperative Learning,” the President of the Chamber of Commerce spoke on the principle “Purpose,” and the Motorcycle Club spoke on the principle “Unity.” MAHRA (Maryland Association of Human Rights Agencies) and Maryland Commission on Civil Rights will host Legislation Day on 2/8, from 8a – 1 p. Legislative Committee members and all Commissioners are encouraged to attend. Members can speak with Legislators in their offices and speak to them about issues that affect citizens of Howard County. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Celebration will be held on Sun, 1/20 at Howard High School, reception at 2 p.m., program begins at 3 p.m. The MLK Day of Service kick-off will be held on Monday, 1/21 at Patuxent Woods at 8 a.m. There are twelve county-wide projects for the Day of Service, and the County Executive will be making a visitation with as many of those agencies as possible, during the day.

7. CLOSED SESSION – Members voted to go into Closed session at 7:37 p.m. Members voted to go back into Open Session at 7:42 p.m.

8. NEW BUSINESS – Commissioners will discuss with Dr. Sands next month separating Pre-trial conference from Settlement portion of the pre-hearing conference. Commissioners Joan, Peter, and Scott were panel members during the last pre-hearing held on 1/14/19.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS –

10. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.